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Remarks

**Reception
to celebrate the**

Opening of the 2006-2007 Antarctic Season

30 September 2006

Ambassador Herrera, Ambassador Marolla, David Keegan, Honourable Paul East, Members of Parliament, Mayor Garry Moore, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen... Good Evening...

United States - New Zealand cooperation in Antarctic science is extraordinary and the scientific impact that has resulted from our collaboration is enormous. We have worked together for many years. We are old friends with a common interest. And because of this special relationship, our nations benefit by achieving efficiencies in operations, flexibility in scheduling, and effectiveness in science, and environmental protection, which exceeds what we could do separately. The complex logistical feats that our programs undertake each year somehow seem easier given our combined efforts.

As we embark on our 50th season together, it is important to reflect on the progress that has resulted from our close partnership; one that has continued to thrive for

a half a century and one that has bestowed great success on our collective Antarctic programs. Though Antarctica New Zealand and the United States Antarctic Program are each a distinct program, the common values that we share and the significance that we both place on scientific research has fostered a relationship that has contributed to the success of Antarctic science and discovery, not only for the good of our respective nations, but for the good of our planet and human-kind.

With the start of this austral summer season, several new and significant international research efforts will be launched.

This is the inaugural year of field activities for ANDRILL, an international collaboration among New Zealand, Italy, Germany, and the United States to recover and study sediment cores that span important intervals of time as Earth transitioned from a greenhouse world to an icehouse world. These records will reveal the direct history of ice sheet development on the continent and thus will build beyond the proxy records of general ice mass that have been inferred from deep ocean sediments.

This year will also see the field mobilization of a new deep ice core drill system in preparation for start of a major new activity – the WAIS Divide Ice Core Project. The drill system was designed in the United States in consultation with the international drilling community and has been successfully field tested in Greenland. Associated projects are being designed to provide more information on the stability of the entire West Antarctic

ice sheet. The West Antarctic ice sheet, should it disintegrate, has the potential to raise global sea level by more than 5 meters.

Commencing in 2007 and extending over the following few years, several nations will come together to drill a deep ice core in central West Antarctica. The expectation is that this will produce records of climate and atmospheric gases over the last 120,000 years for understanding change in Antarctica... and also...for comparison with a similar record from central Greenland for understanding inter-hemispheric variations.

These are but a few of the important projects that we will work on in the season ahead.

In keeping with the spirit of international collaboration, International Polar Year 2007-2008 will be inaugurated in March 2007. The International Polar Year (IPY) marks the 50th anniversary of the International Geophysical Year (IGY) 1957-1958, where 67 participating nations left an amazing legacy of discoveries and technological accomplishments that still affect our lives today. IPY is an equally important undertaking that strives to increase levels of integrated, cooperative science.

Dr. Karl Erb, Director of the National Science Foundation's Office of Polar Programs could not be here with us this evening to enjoy our celebration. However, he sends his regards and extends warm wishes through a message that he asked me to convey to you.

Dr. Erbs' Message Follows

With a successful year behind us, we are once again, poised to celebrate the start of another season. Every year is special, but this year is truly significant as we embark upon our 50th year together. This anniversary is a milestone that emphasizes the strong collaboration and friendship that exists between *Antarctica New Zealand* and the *United States Antarctic Program*... long-time friends with a common interest in research and discovery.

The dawn of our 50th season also marks the 50th anniversary of the International Geophysical Year (IGY) of 1957-1958, in which unparalleled exploration of Earth and space led to discoveries in many fields of science that have forever changed the way we view the polar regions and their global significance.

In honor of the contributions and success of IGY and in the spirit of international collaboration, International Polar Year 2007-2008 will soon be underway — an intense, internationally coordinated campaign of research that will initiate a new era in polar science.

As we start down the road of our 50th year and launch into IPY, we hope and expect that the International Polar Year, like IGY before it, will result in international collaborative research such as that of ANDRILL, as well as educational and outreach activities that will bring fundamental scientific discoveries that extend well

beyond the IPY event, and capture the world's imagination in science and exploration.

Our sustained partnership has brought us much success in our national Antarctic programs. I know that the lasting strength of our partnership will carry us through the second half of our century, together, in Antarctica.

I wish us all the best for a successful and inspiring season ahead and for many more to come.

...That Concludes Dr. Erb's Message

In closing...on behalf of Dr. Erb and the U.S. Antarctic Program I want to thank Mayor Garry Moore and the Christchurch community for the continuing opportunity to stage USAP activities in Christchurch and to access the infrastructure and resources that your City offers.

I want to thank Lou Sanson and Antarctica New Zealand for the continuing good relations and cooperation between our respective Programs.

And, I want to thank the Christchurch City Council and Antarctica New Zealand for welcoming the U.S. Antarctic Program to celebrate the Opening of the 2006 – 2007 Antarctic Season and to participate in the Christchurch Antarctic Festival 2006.

Thank you all very much...